

**What is claimed is:**

1. A printing apparatus for printing an image based on image data, comprising:

a priority decision unit operable to decide which to prioritize, a quality of the image at the time of printing or a speed of processing the image data, based on print content description data including information on layout instructions for printing the image;

a print data generation unit operable to generate print data including the image, based on the following: the print content description data, the decision made by the priority decision unit, and the image data; and

a printing unit operable to print the print data generated by the print data generation unit.

2. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,

wherein in a case where a plurality of images are arranged in a sheet, and the print content description data indicates that the plurality of images are arranged in the sheet to be printed, the priority decision unit decides to prioritize the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of each of the plurality of images at the time of printing, and the print data generation unit generates the print data based on said decision made by the priority decision unit.

3. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,

wherein in a case where a plurality of images are arranged in a sheet, the print content description data indicates that: i) the plurality of images are arranged in the sheet to be printed; and ii) each of the plurality of images is printed at the number of pixels smaller than a predetermined number of pixels, the priority decision unit decides that the speed of processing the image data should be prioritized rather than the quality of said each of the plurality of

images at the time of printing, and the print data generation unit generates the print data based on said decision made by the priority decision unit.

5     4.     The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,  
          wherein in a case where: 1) a plurality of images are arranged  
          in a sheet; 2) the print content description data indicates that: i) the  
          plurality of images are arranged in the sheet to be printed, and ii)  
10     each of the plurality of images is printed at the number of pixels  
          smaller than a predetermined number of pixels; and 3) the plurality  
          of images are different from one another, the priority decision unit  
          decides that the speed of processing the image data should be  
          prioritized rather than the quality of said each of the plurality of  
15     images at the time of printing, and the print data generation unit  
          generates the print data based on said decision made by the priority  
          decision unit.

5.     The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,  
          wherein in a case where the print content description data  
20     indicates that the image is to be printed at the number of pixels  
          smaller than the predetermined number of pixels, the priority  
          decision unit decides that the speed of processing the image data  
          should be prioritized rather than the quality of the image at the time  
          of printing, and the print data generation unit generates the print  
25     data based on said decision made by the priority decision unit.

6.     The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,  
          wherein when the priority decision unit decides to prioritize  
          the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of the  
30     image at the time of printing, and both the image data of high  
          resolution and the image data of low resolution are generated for  
          the image, the print data generation unit generates the print data

based on the image data of low resolution.

7. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,  
wherein when the priority decision unit decides to prioritize  
5 the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of the  
image at the time of printing, the print data generation unit  
generates the print data by partly skipping plural steps taken in  
processing the image data.

10 8. The printing apparatus according to Claim 1,  
wherein when the priority decision unit decides to prioritize  
the speed of processing the image data rather than the quality of the  
image at the time of printing, and Joint Photographic Experts Group  
format is used as a format of the image data, the print data  
15 generation unit generates the print data by decoding only a Direct  
Current component of the image data.

9. A method of printing an image based on image data,  
comprising:

20 a priority decision step of deciding which to prioritize, a  
quality of the image at the time of printing or a speed of processing  
the image data, based on print content description data including  
information on layout instructions for printing the image;

a print data generation step of generating print data including  
25 the image, based on the following: the print content description data,  
the decision made in the priority decision step, and the image data;  
and

a printing step of printing the print data generated in the print  
data generation step.

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10. A program for printing an image based on image data, causing  
a computer to execute the following steps:

a priority decision step of deciding which to prioritize, a quality of the image at the time of printing or a speed of processing the image data, based on print content description data including information on layout instructions for printing the image;

5           a print data generation step of generating print data including the image, based on the following: the print content description data, the decision made in the priority decision step, and the image data; and

10           a printing step of printing the print data generated in the print data generation step.